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EDITOR MRS. H. J. WATKINS

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Congo News Letter

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

II CORINTHIANS 4:6

FOOTLIGHTS

THEY call Africa the Dark Continent"—and it is. They say that Congo is a land of darkness and superstition and fear —and it is. But they sometimes fail to add that lights are shining in Congo now—and they are.

Material light is evident in many places. A number of years ago the pilot of an airplane flying over Congo at night would have seen only a dark blackness below. But today he would see the bright lights of cities like Léopoldville, Elisabethville, and Stanleyville, and the lesser lights of many other towns and posts. The electric lights of civilisation are shining now in many sections of the Congo.

But there are other lights shining too in this land. Spiritual light is shining in the heart of this dark continent. Throughout all of Congo you find mission stations which are the generators of this new spiritual light, which is driving out the darkness of fear, superstition, witchcraft, and ignorance. One of these bright lights is our station at Vanga.

Vanga is located on the west bank of the Kwilu river about 350 miles from Léopoldville by river, and 500 miles overland by truck. The trip requires two and a half days by truck—if there are no mishaps, broken springs, or flat tires,—and from eight to fifteen days by river boat on the Congo, Kwa, Kasai, and Kwilu rivers. The station has been built on a plateau overlooking the river providing a beautiful view of the Kwilu, and a good view of the mail boats which arrive every twelve days. The buildings—hospital wards, dispensary, surgery, school rooms, dormitories, teachers' homes, missionaries homes, administration building, workshop, and the large church are all built of a light colored

brick which blends into the green of the tall trees and beautiful flowers and bushes.

Being just four degrees south of the equator, and on a relatively low plateau, makes Vanga hot and steamy at some times of the year. But the shade of the magnificent trees and the cool evening breezes from the river give us pleasant relief. Not so long ago hippopotami and crocodiles played in the river, leopards hunted in the forest, and other wild life was plentiful. Today it is a rare but real thrill to natives and missionaries alike to see a leopard or hear a hippopotamus roaring at night.

The Vanga station ministers to an area of approximately 8500 square miles, somewhat larger than the state of Massachusetts or New Jersey. People of at least ten different tribes are found in this area, and that many different languages are spoken. Some of the tribes were formerly cannibals; others have been driven into this section from other parts of the country. Many different customs and ideas are found here, but gradually the people are joining a new tribe, the tribe of Jesus Christ, and they are trying to follow His customs and speak His language of love.

This is Vanga—a light in the darkness—, a place where one lives not in the blackness of fear, superstition, and ignorance, but in the light of God's Word, and His Love for all.

* * *

"*Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.*" ISAIAH 60:1

It was in 1912 that Doctor William H. Leslie began his work at Vanga. Let us glance at the

HIGHLIGHTS

of the history of the Vanga station.

HEWING A STATION OUT OF THE AFRICAN JUNGLE

Two axes, a saw, a hammer, a box of nails, two bales of cloth, and ten sacks of salt comprised the working equipment with which Dr. Leslie hewed Vanga out of the primitive African jungle.

With this meager outfit he attacked the tangled mass of underbrush and interlacing creepers which bind together the age-old jungle giants and form with them Congo's menacing denial to the pioneering onslaught of the missionary. He forced his way up the declivity of the bank of the Kwilu river, and despite brush nurtured tsetse fly and ubiquitous mosquito, bit by bit pushed back the wild forest until he had won the broad sweep of a splendid plateau from the wilderness.

This is not ancient missionary history, for its beginnings date from the year 1912. The forbidding mass of vegetation reared itself above the river bank and cast its heavy shadows over the water. Beyond the fringe of forest skirting the river lay cannibal villages absolutely untouched by the Gospel and very little acquainted with the white man and his ways. The first day's clearing yielded little more than space for the tent on the beach, but day after day the two axes and the saw cut deeper into the intricate mass until the summit was reached, and then the hammer and the box of nails came into play.

This attractive base wrested from endless miles of prevailing wilderness, is merely the starting point from which pioneer journeys have carried the message far and wide through hundreds of miles of plain and forest. (from ROCK BREAKERS–P.H.J.LERRIGO)

* * *

THE COMING OF TATA LESLIE TO VANGA

They came in a small steamer, tying up first at Madibi where they went by trail to Mayoko, from there to Kongo with chief Takungu, searching for a place. Failing to find any they returned here to Vanga where they placed markers.

When they entered the forest along the river to search for either a trail or a village, a man from here saw them and thought they were ghosts. He ran to the village and told them how he had seen people like ghosts, and some of the men were persuaded fearfully to go see them. Tata Leslie said, "Don't run, I am a white man of God who heals in body and in soul too."

When he called the chief Yidi he said to him, "I am anxious to build here, but you must not be afraid and begin to question

why. I have come to heal and care for you, and I want your children too in order to teach them."

He took a group of people to clear a place to build, and when he gave some cloth and a sack of salt to the chief he was willing he should have the place and that the children should be taught. The first villages where he began to take children were Songo, Vanga, and Konzi, just a very few boys. When these boys began to know how to read and tell a few stories he took them with him to other near villages and left them in these villages, sometimes forcing them to stay.

The difficulties of circulating in those times were very great. The people did not want very much the white man to sleep in their places, or to show him their paths or woods, even a little. When in visiting he arrived at one certain village the chief said, "I don't want you to sleep in our sheds," Tata Leslie said, "All right we wont argue about it, we will sleep outside. It is nothing." So we slept outside like the goats and pigs.

When he began to seek the road which goes to Moanza which was not then known very well, he thought we might strike it by going to Kikwit. A State man showed us the direction to Moanza. We started off and those who have gone this afoot know of the people. On the way we saw a messenger who had caught a woman for no offence whatever. Doctor took the woman from him and took her with us. Her town people stood armed and ready to fight with their bows and knives, but when we sent the woman ahead of us they came running down. Because of the years we cannot recall just the day and the year, but only the incident itself. From Kikwit until we arrived at Moanza was not very easy, the good mixed with the bad. But his God cared for us until we had fully returned.

Ah ! Tata Leslie was a persistent and persevering man. We see others coming to help us, but ah, the sorrow that he must leave us at this time. Perhaps others will come, perhaps not. We are thankful for his patience which brought the Light to some of us a little. We are thankful for others working now. If the Lord helps them, then our land may be enlightened.

(Philip Kimbiese, CONGO NEWS LETTER, July-Oct. 1936)

VANGA MEDICAL WORK

The Vanga station was opened by Dr. Leslie in 1912. The spot chosen for the station was then a piece of virgin forest where leopards hunted on the bank of the Kwilu River. A short distance above Vanga on a strip of sandy beach the elephants had their bathing place. A small area was cleared. Mud and wattle houses were erected. School work began with a class of twenty boys. Just a few are still alive, and four are still in the service of the mission; one as a pastor, one as a carpenter, and two as masons who have built all the brick buildings at Vanga. Nearby villages were added to the work, and school chapels were built so that classes could be started for the village children.

Besides supervising and building the station, Dr. Leslie carried on an active evangelistic and medical work. In all these arduous tasks he was ably assisted by Mrs. Leslie, who also bore the "burden of the day." The work grew rapidly and at our coming to Vanga, April 1926, 250 villages had been occupied and as many teacher-evangelists were busy teaching and preaching to the multitudes. The little "back porch dispensary" opened by Dr. Leslie had developed into a brick building housing the dispensary, laboratory, and surgery, and some mud buildings, still in use, to house the patients. In a few years other hospital wards were added. The latest addition is the twenty bed maternity unit opened for partial use in 1948. There is a general ward with fourteen beds and three two-bed rooms for private cases. The delivery room and special rooms will soon be completed.

Of necessity the medical work in the earlier years of the station was confined mostly to internal medicine and the combating of tropical diseases. Obstetrics was at its very beginning and the great majority of the babies were born in the villages in unhygienic surroundings, according to the old tribal customs. Many died from cord infections and exposure, and the infant mortality was very high. One of my first obstetrical experiences at Vanga was a day, shortly after my arrival, when I was called to help a woman at the workmen's village. I hurried there expecting to walk into the house, get things in order, and do a sanitary home de-

livery. But the woman was not at home. She had gone out to her garden patch in a small nearby forest, and I crawled through a thicket on hands and knees for a distance of about seventy-five yards, the branches brushing me in the face and scratching me here and there. We got there in time to do the honors. It is not necessary to say that I did my best to teach the women spectators that the hospital was the best place to deliver their babies. But it was a long uphill pull against the tribal customs. After a good many fatal cases, due to neglect in the villages, the obstetrical work began to increase. We used to have "health institutes" for our teacher-evangelists and they helped considerably along this line of work. As the years passed the maternity work has taken a great upswing. Our pre-natal consultations and baby clinics have done much good, and lives of many mothers and babies have been saved.

Before my arrival at Vanga almost no surgery had been done, and I wondered how long it would take until the people would come for surgical treatments. I did not have to wait very long, for just about three weeks after my arrival I had my first surgical experience at Vanga—a strangulated hernia. My instruments had not yet been unpacked. There was no equipped operating room. For an anesthetic I had 1-1/2 ounces of chloroform, and no trained assistants. The operating light was a small kerosene lamp held by one of the hospital assistants. I did the operation. The patient was cured and became a staunch friend of the mission. After this and other emergencies, the natives began to realize that surgery could restore many of them to health and strength. Cases began coming in and it was necessary to organize a "surgical department", with its special group and days for operating. Now we have three surgical mornings each week when six to eight, and sometimes more, operations are performed. We average twenty operations a week. Many emergency operations occur. No matter what time of the day they come, noon or midnight, we are always ready. After our early, small beginnings, we now have a surgical department where 600, 800, even 1000 operations are performed each year.

With the growth of the medical work a rotating service was established and all except the heads of the services are changed

three times a year. In this way the assistants receive experience in all phases of the medical work. Trained nurses, from our school (*Ecole Protetsante des Auxiliaires Medicaux au Congo*) at Sona Bata are in charge of the major services, surgery, dispensary, laboratory, maternity. They are conversant with the general and special hospital routine, the giving of medicines and their dosages, and normal obstetrics. They render valuable service.

We cooperate with the Colonial Government in combating disease and epidemics in the area surrounding the Vanga Mission. An annual medical census is taken, births and deaths are reported, villages inspected, and hygienic conditions improved. Cases of endemic diseases such as sleeping sickness, leprosy, yaws, and hookworm, are segregated and written up for treatments. A close check is made from time to time as to the progress of the condition of the patients. We are responsible for a population of 9800 natives. Even with regular vaccinations for small pox each year (especially for the children) some cases of this disease are imported from the outside, and vaccination campaigns are conducted from time to time. Constant vigilance upon the surrounding country is important.

In order to help the medical work at the other mission stations in the Kwango area, Moanza, and Kikongo, regular visits are made by the Vanga doctor. A goodly number of operations are perfomed and numerous medical consultations are held at these times. With the opening of the new Boko station among the Bayaka, medical visits to this station will be necessary.

This is only the physical aspect of the Vanga Medical work. There is a vastly more important phase, namely the evangelistic approach to the throngs seeking help at the Vanga Hospital. Daily evangelistic services are held and the Gospel is proclaimed to the thousands coming for help. In that "medical corner" of the Vanga station hospital with its 125 beds, the sick, relatives, and friends hear the "old, old story of Jesus and His love." It is safe to say that 15,000 to 20,000 hear the Gospel preached every year at the Vanga Hospital. White is the field, great is the harvest.

DR. A. C. OSTERHOLM

Notes from articles on Evangelistic work at Vanga by Lewis and Susie Brown, written in 1935. — "It has impressed me as never before how much of the old is still mingled with the new in their life and thought. Maybe I needed this particular thing to be impressed upon me. To indicate one special event—a few weeks before our return an affair happened in one of our nearby villages in which there was a real reverting to their old witchcraft, thought and methods. Our workmen have said, "Truly you do not know how our people are still bound by these thoughts."

All of this has deepened our conviction of what we have always known, that "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts." Our school boys are going to need this work of the Spirit if they are to give themselves to the work in the villages. Teachers will need His anointing if their message is to be fresh and saving day by day. Church members and converts need it if they are to grow in grace and bear a victorious testimony. And does the missionary need Him any the less ! Our hearts long for a fresh anointing as well, in order that we may be fitted to lead this people aright. Human wisdom and strength are all too frail.

Later in 1938 — I have just prepared a preliminary report of the Evangelistic work for the past year. After eliminating some three or four thousand for lack of constant giving, for conduct unbecoming a child of God, for inattendance at daily or weekly services, and for many other reasons, we still report over 7,000 converts. There are hundreds who give mental assent to the teaching who do not know the Lord as a personal Savior. The truth is that though they desire to be saved they are not yet "born again." God cannot teach spiritual truth either to one whose heart is unchanged nor to one who is disobedient. These two things, to my mind, are the supreme hindrances to baptism: Some have not yet been saved; others have failed to accept the standard of the Word. This has led to ignorance, and ignorance has led to sin. The enmity of the world for those who walk in the narrow way is hard to bear, and many, many in this respect are found wanting.

* * *

Notes from Wm. Robbins written at Vanga 1940 — "Just a week ago I sat down to examine candidates for baptism. If you ever want a work that is inspiring and at the same time most exhausting, I invite you to come with me on one of these trips for the examination of candidates for baptism. What an inspiration it is to see the multitudes that come. There are the old and gray, the worn and bent. There are the sick and maimed and weak. There are the boys and young men filled with enthusiasm, there are the girls and young women filled with joy. They are all sinners, every one of them. As I sit there and ask them questions about their soul's understanding of the Lord Jesus my heart goes out to them. Many that come are in a pitiful condition. Some of the older people have lived all their lives in heathenism and now, as the last sands of life are running out, they come wishing to give what little there is left to the Lord Jesus. Some know so little about Him. Others have an experience and a testimony which no sceptic could deny. One old lady with a radiant smile testified how little by little the understanding of the Gospel had entered her heart and how she had surrendered to Christ. When she was approved for baptism and left me, she waved both arms in the air and shouted to the others in exuberant joy, "I have been accepted, I have been accepted."

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16

We have seen certain highlights of the development of the work at Vanga. Let us turn the

SPOTLIGHTS

on the work as it is today.

THE DOORS OF NEW LIFE

As I look back over some notes, reports, and statistics of the work at Vanga during the last year or two, I am convinced that a summary of the material will make encouraging and interesting reading. The following excerpts are all taken from recent letters or notes, and they indicate the continued fruitfulness that is attending the evangelistic and educational efforts which are being put forth.

"On our last two trips, I examined a number who had professed faith in Christ at two strategic centers, where the majority of the church members and inquirers are connected with the plantations of the big palm-oil company in the area. I was impressed by the strong and agressive men who work as clerks, mechanics, chauffeurs, and planters who presented themselves for baptism. I thought it a particularly healthy sign that so many of these men were accompanied by their wives. The founding of Christian homes in these centers is of vital importance to the life of this rapidly changing land, and I feel that we are fortunate to be able to secure a firm hold upon these key people."

* * *

"How earnest these candidates were ! Some of the men had walked twenty miles after working all day in the hot sun in order to make their confession and to be received into the church. There were very definite evidences of the working of God's spirit in their lives. They are taking their responsibilities seriously, as witnessed by their gifts, their regular attendance at church services, their

concern to have their lives and homes in order, and their willingness to bear open testimony for their Saviour and Lord."

* * *

"We are meeting with what one might strangely but happily call "embarassing response" from the young people in the area. Our schools which are thoroughly saturated with a Christian emphasis and evangelical witness, are turning out so many students who wish to advance to higher training, that we hardly know where to put them. This is certainly a new Africa amid the old, and we strive to fling open all the doors we can so that these young men and women, just emerging from a dark and ignorant past, may be able to walk into the future as new creatures. With their new faith must go the enlightenment and development of heart, mind, and will that shall make them satisfied, vigorous, and efficient witnesses for Christ."

* * *

"We were inspired on seeing the large buildings that had been erected solely by the efforts and funds of the native Christians themselves. Besides the residences for the pastor and teachers, and the new school buildings, there were churches capable of holding one thousand people. And they fill them too ! During our visits, none of these churches could hold the crowds. At one church center some opposing and fanatical natives set fire to several new buildings, but almost overnight the Christians erected another set. At another post lightning struck, burning it and several other buildings to the ground. Yet, when I passed there a little while after, I found a new church and school put up. Such zeal is hard to defeat."

* * *

"After the remarkable ingathering of last year, we rather expected to see the interest and response level off a little. But the movement in the villages continues over our whole Vanga field like a wave, and we are struggling to meet the situation as best we can. During the early part of our week we have been busy with

the direction of the school, the building and other general work of the station, and caring for the numerous letters and affairs that pour into the station from our twenty-six pastors and 450 teacher-evangelists in our far-flung district. But on weekends we have been out in the villages, preaching, counseling with the native leaders, and examining some of the thousands of inquirers who seek to enter the church. Last Sunday, at the Vanga station itself, we held a baptismal service for four hundred who had been received from among many hundreds more whom we had examined here locally. Among these were over thirty young men from our station school."

LEONARD GITTINGS

PHYSICAL CHANGES

Vanga in 1950 is a far cry from Vanga in the year 1926, the year of our first arrival. Of the many mud buildings, today only one remains. The church, seating over a thousand, the school with eleven rooms, the hospital to which has been recently added a new maternity ward and delivery room, and all the mission residences are of brick and cement. The latest addition is a new dormitory on the cottage plan for our girls' boarding school. A brick administration building now stands on the site of our first little mud home. Oil lamps have been replaced by electricity. We have just had word that a new 5000 watt electric plant has been shipped to us by Kansas friends. Narrow, crooked native paths have given way to a great network of automobile roads. Travel to our sister station, Moanza, used to take seven days by foot or "kipoy" we now make it in seven hours by car. From Léopoldville to Vanga was a tedious journey of ten to fourteen days on a wood-burning river boat; we can now fly that distance in two hours.

Our first term at Vanga, we were so isolated that white visitors were few and far between; this past year we have had one hundred fourteen house guests—those who have stayed at least one night and had meals with us. Some stopped only for a day and night, others for a week or ten days. One family of seven remained six weeks for medical care. The above number does not

include those who came for only a day, or to tea, or for minor treatments at the hospital. Since my article is supposed to be mainly the physical changes, I shall leave statistics to others.

However, I should like to add that we, in these twenty-four years, have witnessed equally great advances in the hearts and minds of these to whom we have ministered. All the material changes would be of no value had the spiritual side failed to keep step. All school and medical work has as its first objective one aim—that of winning souls to Christ. Since before the time of our first arrival until the present date, there has been a continuous revival in the Vanga field. From a church membership of around 350 in 1925 there are at present fifteen thousand. The reason for this steady advance is that the foundation of this work was laid on the rock Christ Jesus, and all the building thereon has been as firm and sound as the beginning. This past year five thousand were baptised. But thousands still sit in darkness and the shadow of death in this vast land. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest fields.

LUETTA MARGARET OSTERHOLM

AMAYAH, GIFT FROM GOD

It isn't easy to be a woman in Congo ! Her lot is hard. She must labor from dawn until long past dusk, working her big garden, carrying unbelievably heavy loads, cooking, and caring for her family. Though she bears many children her family seldom seems very large, for so many of them die. Her place in the home is that of the "servant of all" and she seldom receives many thanks for her labour. When she has done all, she has but done her duty, and her husband often wonders why she hasn't done more. Because for so many centuries she has not been looked up to and respected, she often fails to see any reason why she should so live that she will be respected. Even in this age of early dawn of enlightenment for Congo, when, if she were truly deserving, she might receive a bit of the companionship and love which is her due, for the greater part she seems bound down by the inertia of

centuries. Congo's young girls, trained in our mission schools, who show so much possibility during their years of training, are all too often swallowed up by the mass in the village or even on the mission station itself, and slowly drift back into the old lackadaisical ways of indifference and carelessness.

But the picture is not all dark. There are many exceptions to the general rule, women who stand out as signposts to show us the way to the new day for African womanhood, who shine as stars in a dark world. It is because of their courage and devotion, as they stand out against all the mass pressure and discouraging circumstances, that they are beginning to raise the standard of Congo womanhood to a higher level, to draw their sisters in suffering to the Christ who loves and honors womanhood the world over. It is because of such women as these that we do not grow discouraged, but know that "our labors are not in vain in the Lord."

It is of one such woman as these that I want to tell you, one who stands head and shoulders above the mass of our Vanga women, and who even outshines her brave companions in labor. I sat down with her today and asked her to tell me her story.

Amayah was a West Coastman's daughter, but her mother was a Vanga woman from our Mudiambu post. He had come from Sierra Leone to work for one of the Congo companies, and had married amoung our tribes, and joined a Vanga church. He came in to Vanga from time to time and became great friends with Dr. Leslie. When his first wife died he asked her tribe to give him another wife to take her place. The woman who was to become Amayah's mother was given to him. Amayah tells me that she has no memories of her mother who must have died when she was very young, but she remembers her father well. They moved from one post to another in his work. When a fellow West-Coastman died, he adopted his child, Dora, a girl a number of years older than Amayah. They didn't go to a village school, but their father taught them himself at night, and gave them homework to do during the day. He was a wonderful Christian, and taught his girls to sing and pray and worship the Lord Jesus. Sometimes they left the post to go to a nearby village to worship, but always

they worshipped in their home. Since he was well-to-do for an African, his daughters didn't have to work as other Congo girls do, but he kept them busy and out of mischief.

Theirs was a happy home until, when Amayah was only twelve, her father took sick and came to Vanga to die. After his death the two girls stayed on at Vanga and entered the Girls' Boarding School. From that time on they became God's girls and have never left the work of the Lord. Dora, the elder, married one of our pastors and went with him to Kimpese for further training. Amayah, because she was so small and already knew how to read progressed rapidly in school. She has an unusually fine mind and knows how to use it. When she had finished the Girls' School she entered the Boys' School and either taught or worked in the hospital in the afternoon. When hard years came and no missionary was left to carry on the girl's work, Amayah was boarded out on the station and kept right on with her schooling until she became the only girl who has ever finished the Boys' school at Vanga.

When Amayah was still a little girl, Kisaka noticed her and began praying that God would show him whom he should choose for his wife. He was, like Gideon, always putting out fleeces before the Lord about Amayah, and they always seemed to be answered in the affirmative. His village relatives tried to find him a wife a number of times, but his answer was always that God would choose his wife for him. Finally when he broached Amayah on the subject, he found that, though she was much too young yet, she was willing to consent to a tentative engagement. But he wasn't through with his fleeces, so he left for Kimpese without taking her with him. The year he finished Kimpese she finished the Central School, and once again God answered his fleece with dew. She met him at the boat as he had prayed she would, and they were married that summer, a true love match.

After their marriage they both continued teaching. Three years passed before their first baby arrived. Now this is still a serious fault in a Congo woman, and was considered even more serious at the time. Relatives counseled divorce, but Kisaka said, "She is my gift from God, and I will keep her even though we

never have children." When Mangana was born they both felt that he was an answer to prayer. Dark days came again when Amayah lost her second child and very nearly lost her own life, and then again years later when their fourth child died, but though sorely tested, and sometimes failing, as do we all, Amayah continues true to her Lord and His work. Year by year she has learned to take more responsibility until now she is in charge of the whole morning program of the Girls' School, supervising classes in sewing, cooking, embroidery, pottery, crocheting, and knitting. She is a very shy little lady, and is just twenty-nine years old; but if I need to go down to Conference for a month, I have no fear to leave everything in her capable hands.

But it isn't only the work that she does that makes Amayah the leader she is, it is her consecrated spirit. Other women may grow slack and lazy and not get to morning worship, but Amayah will be there up till the day before her sixth child is born. When I ask those interested to come and pray for revival, it matters not that she is the only woman there, she slips in and sits quietly in silent prayer. If there is village visitation to be done, or anything else, it is Amayah who will lead out and urge the others to follow. She can and does make good money by sewing for others, but she prefers to give more than half her time to the Lord's work where she doesn't get one-tenth of what she could make. Her home is seldom without two or three girls who are living with her and going to school.

"Kisaka is good to me," she says, "He never nags or quarrels as most husbands do." And Kisaka, what does he think? You will smile at his answer, but it means something in Congo. "I have never beat her," he said quietly, "and I can testify that we don't have disagreements in our home." Over and over in the half hour that I talked with him he said, "She is my gift from God."

The other day as we were going home from our Revival Prayer meeting I said to him, "Kisaka, I think the other men must be envious of you for having such a wife." His face lit up like a light as he smiled. "I don't know what others think," he replied, "But she satisfies me ! I am thankful to have such a wife." There is no doubt about it that Amayah might not be Amayah without

the strong tower of Kisaka's strength, but then too, Kisaka wouldn't be Kisaka without his Amayah. As long as there are women like her in the making, let us go on building for a Christ-like Congoland.

DORIS WISEMAN

* * *

STATISTICS

MEDICAL		EVANGELISTIC	
Hospital patients	2,349	Churches	25
Surgical patients	744	Pastors	25
Dispensary Patients	10,779	Teacher-evangelists	418
		Villages Occuped	389
		Church Members	15,531
EDUCATIONAL		Followers	7,839
School	429	Baptisms 1949	5,842
Students—Boys	10,363	Total Offerings (1949–50) for	
Girls	8,422	the support of work	751.411
		Total Missionary Offerings	96.580

* * *

GROWING PAINS AT VANGA

The problems connected with our Vanga field are not those of discouragement or lack of response. The word "Thousands" has become so common in our vocabulary that we fear it might lose its significance. Yet we cannot refrain from using it, nor cease to wonder at the remarkable growth and progress of this vigorous native church. During the past year over five thousand adults were received into the church by baptism, out of some twelve thousand whom we examined personally. All of them had been under instruction for at least a year, and had given a satisfactory response when questioned carefully concerning their Christian experience and their understanding of Christian doctrine. In our

schools over twenty thousand young Africans are being given education under the guidance of and at the expense of the self-supporting churches of our Vanga field. The native Christians are being encouraged to look out beyond the limits and interests of their own area and people, and to think in terms of the "regions beyond." During the past few years they have taken up missionary offerings which had been sent to such far-away places as India, the Philippine Islands, and to Europe for the sufferers of World War II. When, at a gathering of delegates from our churches, I proposed that this year's Christmas offering be the largest they had ever given, the pastors and other representatives smiled knowingly at each other. The money came pouring in to the mission station, and we were amazed to find that they had more than doubled their offering of last year, and had given in francs an amount equal to sixteen hundred dollars from their pathetically small income. Besides this, they had given almost one million francs through the year to support entirely their 26 pastors, 100 teachers, and 400 evangelists, and to pay for the erection and maintenance of every church, school building, and residence for native leaders throughout the whole field. They had even cut motor roads at their own expense, some of them several miles long, so that the missionary could bring his truck into the center, and had constructed neat little houses where he could stay during his visit to them. They had cared for widows and orphans on a considerable scale, and never asked the mission for help for one. At a meeting held in our house just before we left for furlough, one of our fine native pastors said a significant thing. "We are growing up," he said earnestly, "we can, and we ought to do more." Such a spirit is radiant with promise.

LEONARD GITTINGS

* * *

A TRIBUTE TO VANGA LEADERS

My first recollection of Vanga leaders is from the conference at Sona Bata in 1928. A group of us new missionaries had arrived just in time for the conference. Dr. Leslie from Vanga had come

and with him were two families bound for Kimpese. They were Thomas Ngumina and family and Wangata and family. They were the first to enter training at Kimpese from Vanga : The women as well as the men were outstanding in character and preparation. The women were intelligent and gifted. The men had already proven themselves as teacher-evangelists. Their three years of study finished, they returned to Vanga, where they were put in charge of district churches. Sad to say, Wangata fell into sin and left his lovely wife and children and wandered far from the Lord. His wife died after undergoing much hardship. Thomas Ngumina is a man of unusual ability and force of character, who has done a splendid work through all the years since he became a pastor. For some years now, he has been pastor-at-large, together with Pumbulu who is also a deeply consecrated man.

After these first men had ventured forth others followed yearly. Among them were Luhonda, Pumbulu, Kekete, Mawanda, Koto, Muhema, Nsomo, Nsa, and others. Luhonda went to be with the Lord in December 1939 after much suffering. He did a faithful work as long as his frail body would let him. His second daughter, Estelle, is the wife of a Sona Bata trained nurse and she herself holds a certificate as a mid-wife. There is much that could be told about the lives of these men. Pumbulu was a village teacher when I first came to Vanga. Later he went to Kimpese, and returned to become a pastor. While on a visit to Moanza he received news that his eldest daughter had died. This was a severe test of his faith and for a long time he felt that he was in darkness and sometimes questioned God's leading and guidance. But he continued in the Lord's work and a merciful Father led him into a great experience at a regional conference held in the Kikongo field. At this time another daughter was ill, and he felt that he must stay at home, but his wife encouraged him to go. She is a woman of faith and character who has been a great help to her husband. She said to him, "The Lord will not fail us." He went, and a day or so later she sent a note to him. She simply sent a Scripture verse and from that Pumbulu knew that all was well at home. At this conference he experienced a great spiritual uplift, and the darkness that had hidden God's face for so long vanished.

Among these early leaders in the Vanga work, were some who because they were older did not go on for further training. One of these was John Izana, who had little schooling, but was taught of the Spirit. He preached the Word until the Lord took him home. As a boy Izana had been sold as a slave, but he saved the few francs that he earned as a pastor, and bought his freedom, as well as that of many of his relatives. In 1947 when he was assisting some teachers in building a school, he suddenly fell over and his life on earth was ended. The Lord took him into mansions not made with hands, and not built with logs and clay and grass roofs.

Not forgetting those who have served in the medical work, I would mention Madioko, Kalema, Lubeme, and others. Years ago Madioko, a Vanga man, was working at Léopoldville. He had become a Christian and was devoting all his spare time to Christian work. When he wished to return to Vanga, missionaries of the B.M.S. wrote to Dr. Leslie recommending him for Christian Service. At Vanga he taught part time in the station boarding school, helped with the evangelistic work, and worked in the hospital. Whenever there was trouble or any matter to be settled Madioko was called on to help. He was trusted and honored by both natives and missionaries alike. Madioko worked for more than twenty years before the opportunity came to take a nurse's course. He went to Sona Bata and took the course there and received his diploma this year.

Madioko, Kalema, and Lubeme had learned to smoke. Dr. Leslie spoke to them about it, but they saw no harm in it. Madioko began to search the scriptures and was convicted when reading about the harm of bad habits. He stopped but his companions did not want to do so. He began praying for them, and one day when they had bought a package of cigarettes they found that they did not care for any that day. They kept the cigarettes and tried several times to smoke them, but they had such distaste for them that they threw them away and never touched them again.

Many Vanga women have rendered faithful service to the Lord, but perhaps in a less spectacular way. Among them are the

wives of the leaders mentioned, such as Pumbulu's wife, who by her strength of character and her devotion to the Lord, has had great influence on her husband's life and work, as well as on the women and children in the churches they have served. Another is Mama Sala, wife of Madioko, who used to preach a better sermon than her husband even though she could not read. Her husband would teach her the Scripture passage and help her prepare her message and she would give it with great dignity and spiritual power. Then there is Mama Hebe who years ago taught side by side with her teacher husband in a village school. But her husband Tanawana wandered far from the Lord, leaving his wife and family, and lived in deep sin. Mama Hebe came to the mission station to serve as matron of the girls' school and continued to be a mother to many young girls for a number of years. Of late years she has worked as a nurse's aid in the hospital.

Time will not suffice to tell of many others, but the Lord keeps faithful record and none will be forgotten before Him. He has said, "Be thou fahiful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

ALICE JORGENSON

* * *

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light." LUKE 8:16.

Throughout the busy day of a missionary there are always many

SIDELIGHTS

which add color, laughter, and sometimes tears to his life.

VANGA

Vanga—the very sound of the word spreads a warm glow around my heart. It is a small world in itself, this mission station—my world and the world of my missionary colleagues and native

friends. To us it is the place to which the Master has called us. To them it is the center of the universe, the hub around which their small world swings.

I wish that each one of you might see Vanga for it is a a beautiful station situated on the side of a rolling hill with a wide swift flowing river at her feet, and the African jungle crowding her in on all sides. There are towering trees and flowering bushes, and many citrus fruit trees. Our spring comes in October and November and during your winter our orange blossoms are wafting their fragrance to the skies.

When I think of Vanga I think both of laughter and of tears, of some moments of high victory and of others when we walked the valley road. And if I may, I want to picture a bit of each, as I look at Vanga, for you.

When I first came to Vanga there was no metal furniture in the hospital, only rough, homemade wooden beds with slats or small branches for springs, and a thin reed mat for a mattress. One day as I was making rounds I heard a crash and wheeled to snatch a sick baby from its mother's arms as she fell through the bed, arms and legs flying. A slat had broken ! The native nurse took her out and another branch was inserted in the place of the broken one. Today we have all metal beds and are thankful to the Master for his providing care.

One Saturday afternoon we were having a women's meeting and everything was going nicely when in walked an old hen. She looked us over, sidled up the side aisle to the center of the platform and stopped. There she cocked her head to one side, chuckled, cocked it on the other, chuckled again, paraded back and forth cross the platform and then leisurely completed her circuit, going down the other side aisle and out the opposite door, much to the amusement of the rather large audience. The worst of it is that I have always had a sneaking suspicion that she was my hen !

A missionary's life out in the bush has its little complications. My church in Peoria, Ill. decided to buy me a fine kerosene refrigerator. Nothing could be more welcome in this sweltering heat ! We had looked for it for months, and when it finally arrived excitement ran high. Doctor came over and helped us put it up,

and we filled it with eggs, water, milk, and other foods, and went joyfully off to bed confident that in the morning we would at last have ice cream. Morning came and we dashed out to see. Upon opening the door a heat wave hit us in the face. The element was defective. The eggs were spoiled and the milk sour. After almost two months of trying, it had to be sent for replacement. Things do not move so fast here in Congo as they do at home. The new refrigerator finally came at the beginning of this second term and what a joy it is !

There were guests for breakfast one morning, six in all, Ruth Dickey and my sister Doris were entertaining; there were only six eggs but they decided to serve them. The table was all set and everyone was seated when in marched the house girl with the tray and only four eggs on it. She leaned over to Ruth and in a stage whisper, so that all the guests heard, said, "Mama, two of the eggs had babies in them."

You say, but you mentioned tears and valley roads. Yes, tears there are, and heartache aplenty—the ache of watching a beloved child wander from the way and being unable to stop his headlong flight, tears when our beautiful little black baby girl was called Home. We had thought she was our gift from Heaven, but we learned that the Master had but loaned her to us for one short year to be our sunshine. Yet we yielded her at His call and now we know that there is more sunshine in Heaven because of her baby smile. At her grave perhaps the Master permitted us to help break the bonds of fear of death. With tears streaming down their faces our school girls sang, at our request, "He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today."

Not long before Bukaka died the Master, knowing the void that would be left, sent us a Christmas gift. It was a very questionable gift, at first, a tiny itchy, emaciated baby boy. His Christian uncle came carrying him to me pleading, "Help me, Mama, or my baby will die." I am afraid if we are to be perfectly honest we must admit that we didn't want him very badly at first, but we recognized in him one of the little ones for whom the Master died. We took him and fed him and clothed him in your White Cross baby clothes, and I built for him a little screened-in-bed out of a White Cross

box. He helped to fill the void in our hearts, and eventually came to personify for us, during our furlough and study time in Belgium, the little black hands of Congo's children tugging at our heart strings, drawing us back to Congoland.

Before I leave the story of Noeli I should like to pay tribute to a great Christian spirit, Mama Hebe. Noeli became a laughing roly-poly baby boy, and I persuaded Mama Hebe, a mother of five children who was left alone to support her brood because she chose the way of Christ instead of her husband's way, to take him and care the for him. She did a beautiful job of it, praying over him in his little White Cross bed before he was old enough to talk. One day when he was a bit over a year old, her little girl came running to me with Noeli, all excited and joyful. "Mama," she exclaimed, "Noeli has learned to pray !" Then to him, "Noeli, pray !" Noeli folded his baby hands, hid his eyes and said, "Amen."

One day Hebe came along our path, her arms swinging, with a basket on her head. In one end were her garden tools, and to my utter horror in the other end sat Noeli. "Mama," I gasped, "he will fall out !" "Don't be silly," she responded, "He knows better than that." He was all of eight or ten months old. The thing that amazes me is that she was right. He sat perfectly still, chuckling happily to himself.

Vanga shepherds a field of 8600 square miles. Once I had the privilege of traveling in the district. One of the lovely surprises was the little naked village children who met me half-way and escorted me, singing hymns, to their village, and on until the children from the next village met me. Another joy was to learn that in each village I passed I was expected to stop and pray with them. Somehow they know when we are coming and are all gathered waiting and eager for the Words of Eternal Life.

Oh, it is a joy to be one "sent of God" to these people; a joy and a tremendous challenge. There are so few of us, and the fields are so white unto harvest ! We need more help, more workers, so, badly ! Let me close these few scattered memories with the words of one of my most consecrated nurses. He said to me, "Mama, are there not just lots of Christians in America ?" I replied,

"Yes, Kapala, there are many fine Christians in my country." Then he asked the question which I in turn must pass on to you. "Then why don't they send us more missionaries? Don't they love us enough?"

DOROTHY WISEMAN

* * *

Shortly after our arrival at Vanga in July 1945, a chief came to our door with the request that we send a Christian teacher to his village. We questioned him and discovered that he came from a pagan village where there had once been a Catholic teacher. Of course we intended to fill the request as soon as possible, but out of curiosity we asked the old chief why he wanted a Christian teacher. His answer was revealing, "We have one Protestant Christian living in our village. We like his ways and his habits. We want to have more people like him." That was truly a light placed, not under a bushed, but on a candle-stick.

C. J. J.

* * *

Recently one of our finest Christians, a boy who grew up in our home, had a misunderstanding with his wife. I knew he would be ashamed and depressed at having harmed his testimony, so I chose a lovely flowered sheet of note paper and on it wrote Psalms 103:8 – 14; I John 1:9; Philippians 3:13, 14; Philippians 4:19. This I sent to them by a school boy, along with a bottle of syrup as they have several small shildren who like sweets. Next day he came to see me and said, "Mama Peggy, I want to thank you for yesterday's note. We read the Bible passages, then confessed our sins and asked forgiveness, and then we got up and ate syrup and pancakes until we could hold no more."

L. M. O.

* * *

My first operation at Vanga — A strangulated hernia had come in, and it was evening. We had to operate. I wanted to press the button for electric lights, but there were none, so I sent for a

small kerosene lamp, the only one in our posession at the time. One of the hospital boys was designated to hold the lamp "just like this," so the light would fall on the field of the operation. The anesthetic was started, the lamp held just so, and as soon as the patient was asleep I began. I wished that I had three or four eyes independent of each other—one to watch the anesthetist, one to watch the lampstand, and one or two to see what I was doing. There were many spectators—inside Mr. Brown and Mr. Albaugh, outside a great crowd of natives who were seeing an operation for the first time in their lives. Years later one of the spectators, who was a school boy on that memorable night, and who later became a registered nurse and a fine surgical assistant, told me his version of what he saw. He said, "We saw how you opened the abdomen, took out the intestines, washed them clean, and put them back in again. Truly we all wondered with great wonder."

The operation proceeded and I was soon oblivious to anything but operative technique. "But what is this ?" I asked myself. I began to smell kerosene. I raised my eyes and beheld the human lampstand close to the field of operation. While bending over to see what he could see, the lamp was held at an angle and drops of kerosene were falling on the sterile sheet covering the operative field. I groaned within myself, fearing an infection. There was none. The patient made an uneventful recovery. This was my first operation at Vanga.

A. C. O.

* * *

The boys of the sixth class and I visited villages over week-ends with the expressing purpose of winning back those who have left the church, and winning new souls for Christ. One of the first things we did on arriving at a village was to call the Christians together and ask for the names of the unsaved. Each of us took one or two names, and made an effort to speak to and pray with the people before Sunday morning.

I wish you could share the light on the faces of my boys when they came to me and said, "Mama, my person accepted Christ," or "Mama, there were two others in the house of my person, and

they want to follow Jesus too." Besides the thrill of souls won, I have the thrill of seeing my boys learn the joy of winning souls for Christ. M. J.

* * *

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.
PSALM 119:105.

As we conlude this story of the Vanga mission station, let us turn our

SEARCHLIGHTS

on the future, centering our attention primarily on the hopes and needs of this great field.

A number of factors point to a promising future for the Baptist work on the Vanga field. Of primary importance is the sound foundation which has been laid by the far-sighted and patient labor of the pioneer missionaries, who, from the beginning, stressed self-support and a strong sense of stewardship. Equally important is the presence of a vigorous group of fairly well-trained native leaders. More than thirty Kimpese trained pastors and teachers form the nucleus for the building of an effective indigenous church. Nor should one overlook the thousands of sincere and faithful church members of whom much can be expected as they continue to grow in their understanding of their Christian responsibilities.

This all gives rise to great hopes for the years to come. It does not seem improbable to expect that this Vanga church, which has been numbering its baptisms by the thousands for the past few years, will continue to gain numerically. An outreach into villages on the fringes of the field, which have as yet been untouched by the Christian gospel, as well as continued evangelistic efforts in the areas already served, should mean a steady flow of new converts to the Christian faith. However, perhaps even more important should be the growth of the church in quality as well as in quantity. If the Congo Christian schools continue their advance in standard, as well as their evermore effective outreach to a

larger proportion of the Congolese youth, we undoubtedly can hope not only for a more capable native leadership, but we also can expect an increase in the effectiveness of the Christian witness in this area through the creation of a vastly better educated Christian laity. Moreover, there is every reason to believe that the missionary spirit of the Vanga church, which already has resulted in notable contributions to the missionary cause in other lands, will continue to show an everincreasing concern for and effort to advance the Christian work in both Congo and foreign lands. And the hopes for advance in this field could be multiplied —all with every prospect of success.

Yet, these hopes cannot be realized unless the one great need of this and all our Congo field is met, the need for more missionary personnel to guide this advance. For the schools at Vanga and elsewhere will not produce the consecrated native Christian leaders in sufficient numbers to adequately serve and train the Congo church unless there are enough educational missionaries to staff the mission schools. Nor will the missionary spirit of the Congo church have much chance of growing if the missionary spirit of the parent American church is lagging. And most appalling of all, neither will many souls in outlying villages ever even hear of Jesus Christ unless there is sufficient missionary personnel to reach out to them.

God has wrought great things at Vanga during the years that have passed since Dr. Leslie first began hewing a mission station out of the African jungle which arose from the Kwilu River near the pagan village of Vanga. His consecrated servants have healed countless thousands of bodies and minds, and brought the light of His gospel to tortured souls. And one has the faith that this light shall continue to burn yet brighter in this part of darkest Africa. For will not those who love the Lord sustain those who hold forth the torch of His gospel that others groping their way along the road of life may find Him who is the Light of the World ?

* * *

"*In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*"

(JOHN 1:5 Revised Standard Version)

The following missionaries have worked at Vanga since the founding of the station.

Dr. and Mrs. Leslie 1912–1931

Rev. and Mrs. Nugent 1919–1925

(Mr. Nugent died on the field and Mrs. Nugent stayed until 1927)

Mrs. Hilda Bain 1924–1928, and 1932–1936

Rev. and Mrs. Dana Albaugh 1924–1926

Rev. and Mrs. L. A. Brown 1924–1939

Dr. and Mrs. Osterholm 1926–to the present

Alice Jorgenson 1928–1935

Helen Raff 1928–1931 (Miss Raff is now Mrs. Robbins)

Rev. and Mrs. Robbins 1935–1945

Rev. and Mrs. Elmer Hall 1930–1934

Dr. Dorothea Witt 1935–1936

Eva Shepard 1938–1941

Ruth Dickey 1942–1949

Dr. and Mrs. Freas 1942–1944

Doris Wiseman 1945– to the present

Dorothy Wiseman 1945 to the present

Rev. and Mrs. J. Chester Jump 1945–1949

Rev. and Mrs. L. Gittings 1948–1950

Dr. Jean Austin 1948–1949

BELGIAN CONGO MISSION DIRECTORY
with P. O. addresses*

BANZA MANTEKE
via Matadi
Miss Mary Bonar
Miss Esther Ehnbom, R.N.
Dr. and Mrs. H. M. Freas
Rev. and Mrs. Philip Uhlinger
Miss Annis Ford

BOKO
via Popokabaka et Inkisi
Rev. and Mrs. W. F. Robbins
Miss Eva Shepard

KIKONGO *sur Wamba*
via Banningville
Miss Agnes Anderson, R.N.
Rev. E. and G. Atkins
Rev. and Mrs. L. A. Brown
Miss Grace Cooper
Rev. and Mrs. Donald Niles

E.P.I. KIMPESE
via Matadi
Rev. and Mrs. H. Erickson
Rev. and Mrs. E. G. Hall

LEOPOLDVILLE II
Mr. and Mrs. B. W. Armstrong
Rev. Phyllis Benner
Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Watkins

MOANZA *sur Inzia,*
via Masi-Manimba
Rev. and Mrs. Edwin Boone
Miss Marguerite Eldredge
Miss Alice Jorgenson, R.N.

SONA BATA
via Matadi
Drs. Philip and Jean Austin
Rev. and Mrs. R. G. Metzge
Miss Emily Satterberg, R.N
Miss Vendla Anderson

VANGA *sur Kwilu,*
via Banningville
Dr. and Mrs. A. C. Osterholm
Miss Dorothy Wiseman, R.N.
Miss Doris Wiseman

LECO, CONGO BOOK SHOP
B. P. 123 Léo-Est
Rev. and Mrs. G. W. Carpente

ON FURLOUGH

Rev. and Mrs. H. D. Brown
Rev. and Mrs. T. E. Bubeck
Rev. and Mrs. M. S. Engwall
Miss Helen Gaskill
Rev. and Mrs. L. Gittings
Rev. and Mrs. C. E. Smith
Dr. and Mrs. G. W. Tuttle
Miss Jean Luckey

STUDY IN BELGIUM

Rev. and Mrs. C. J. Jump
Dr. and Mrs. John W. Walker

UNDER APPOINTMENT

Dr. Carrie Sprague
Rev. and Mrs. Edward V. Wrigl
Miss Emily Keyes

** Precede name of each station with A.B.F.M.S., except Kimpese*